

Five runners up for global award

The Winner of the 2nd Global Shining Light Award will be announced at Saturdays banquet

By Jan Gunnar Furuly and Sandra Bartlett

GIJC-2008 proudly presents the five top nominees for our international investigative journalism prize, the Global Shining Light Award. The winner will travel home with 2000US dollars. Our jury has made it's decision, but the name of the winner is a big secret until the Saturday evening prize banquet.

The five finalists are:

“Child Alert”, Anas Aremeyaw Anas, Crusading Guide, Ghana.

Through this investigation Anas Aremeyaw Anas discovered how Ghana had become the headquarters of the West African trafficking syndicate and through the reporting of it, smashed the syndicate. As a result of the reporter's work seventeen girls were rescued. The journalist had to work undercover for several months under great personal risk. The investigation raises the issue of how far to go to protect your identity and get the story in cooperation with the criminal gang on one hand and the importance of the story on the other.

“Gangsterism and the faulty legal system”, Sonali Samarasinghe, The Sunday Leader, Sri Lanka.

Sonali Samarasinghe and the Sunday Leader decided enough was enough. What started out as an attempt to follow-up on the beating of a bar patron by the son and body guards of a powerful government minister became an investigation that exposed how that government minister used his power and connections to the Prime Minister, to run roughshod over the media and the justice system. Samarasinghe's tracked down all the people connected to the beating and in the process found many other people, including police officers and

lawyers with stories of corruption and brutality by the government minister and his son.

“The Government 60 bn Rands Arms Deal”, the Investigation team, Mail and Guardian, South Africa.

The investigation team exposed how members of the South African government received kickbacks for purchasing weapons the country didn't need. Among other things, the team's investigation found that the criteria for the arms purchases was changed so expensive and impractical equipment could be bought instead of much cheaper and more easily useable planes. The South African people will be paying for these purchases until the year 2020.

“The Minister and the Mining Sector”, Edik Baghdasaryan, Hetq Online, Armenia.

What started as an attempt to clarify why the country's Environment Ministry was seemingly disinterested in tackling the looming ecological challenges facing the country in particular in regards to the rapidly expanding mining sector. Eight months later Baghdasaryan had discovered that the Minister of the Environment had been very busy awarding exploration licenses to 15 members of his family as well as his office assistants in violation of several statutes.

“Abuja Environmental Task Force”, Solomon Adalbayo, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria.

The project exposed the abuses of the Abuja Environmental Protection Board that abducted and imprisoned people for allegedly violating environmental rules. Adalbayo snuck his audio recording equipment into the jails at great risk to interview people. After his story aired people were released from the jails and the jails were closed.

The jury:

Professor Rune Ottosen, Oslo University College, Norway, national reporter **Sandra Bartlett**, CBC National Radio, Canada and **Nils Mulvad**, researcher & analyst, Kaas & Mulvad, Denmark.

They judged the entries on four criteria:

1. The difficulty of doing the story – the ability to get documents, sources and contacts, what to do in the absence of FOIA, and the difficulty of getting to the places where the interviews or docu-

ments are - the laws and government where the story was done – the rich and powerful are more difficult and dangerous subjects

2. The resources available to the reporter for the story – money, time, research and other journalists – a small organization with very little money has made a bigger commitment than a well funded organization – we looked at what the journalist was able to accomplish with the resources at hand

3. The danger to the reporter and/or the news outlet – physical, economic, political danger – the

threat of lawsuit, jail, death. In many countries in transition journalists do investigative work at their peril, the peril of their families and of their organization

4. The impact of the story – did something change as a result of the story – this is the hardest to determine because many times the story begins a process of change and the change doesn't happen immediately and we took that into account.

All the five nominees will be present at the GIJC-2008 conference in Lillehammer!

